

Effective Governance

Roles and Responsibilities

September 29th Training

By Brian Smith

Why are you here?

(5 minute exercise)

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- Write down what you believe is the role of a charter school board member.
 - Who do you need on the board?
 - How do you define success?
 - How do you measure success?



What we are doing today...

- We are going to look at what is required of the board.
- What it takes to be a board member.
- How to improve any board.
- Best practices
- Holding expectations for the board and the organization
- Whose responsible for what
- And the importance of conducting a meeting a certain way.

What's required of a board member?

- Be prepared to contribute your time, money and other resources. Board members should be prepared to contribute financially to the work of the organization or find individuals who are willing to contribute. In addition, directors should willingly contribute their expertise (e.g. marketing, lobbying,
- Recruit, hire, and monitor the work of the executive director. The executive director is the employee of the board and as such is required to implement policy. It is not the job of the board to engage in the management of day to day operations.

What's required of a board member?

- Advocate on behalf of the organization – Board members must be prepared to promote the views of the organization in order to secure funding, legislation and other support for the organization. This requires an informed board member.
- Approve the budget.
- Individual agendas must be subordinate to the aims of the organization. Acting out of self interest is to be discouraged.
- Keep discussions and reports confidential.
- Provide input into the accounting, legal, etc. to further the aims of the organization.

What's required of a board member?

- Participate fully on board committees as assigned. This means attend the meetings, read the necessary documents ahead of time and be prepared to discuss the issues at hand. Committee meetings are the place where key issues are discussed, analyzed and resolved. Recommendations for board action are formulated at the committee level.

What's required of a board member?

- Governing the organization by establishing broad policies and objectives;
- Ensuring the availability of adequate financial resources;
- Ensuring a quorum is met before moving to the set agenda
- Setting the salaries, approval of new hires, and compensation of company management and benefits of employees

Board Questions

- Have you read your bylaws and charter that governs the boards actions?
- Are you asking the right questions about Financial, Academic, and Legal Compliance?
- What is the definition of management? What is the definition of governance? Are these two concepts the same?(p) vs (b)

Board Questions

- Are you staying on task and have an agenda that is purposeful for board meetings?
- Who is responsible for the charter, mission, vision, and policies being set for the charter school?
- Who is responsible for the raising of funds and acquisition of facilities?

How can you improve your board?



What can a Board do to better their school?

- A clearly delineated, written governance structure with only one staff person reporting to the board.
- Ongoing board training based on identified needs plus orientation and mentors for new board members.
- Properly posted meetings focused on leading the charter school alignment with the vision and mission statements.
- Zero tolerance for e-mail discussions or decision-making.
- Less than half of the business meetings have an Executive Session.

What can a Board do to better their school?

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- Involved future board members on subcommittees or projects in order to acquaint them with the work of the school and give the current board an idea of how that individual would conduct themselves as a board member.
 - A strategic plan to guide them in meeting long-term and short term goals.
 - A board subcommittee that develops the school budget, financial policies and procedures and an internal/external audit process.
 - Board packets distributed to individual board members received a week before the meeting.
 - A board policy manual that is easy to understand and clearly communicates the board's values.

What can a Board do to better their school?

- A focus on outcomes rather than process. A proactive rather than reactive mindset. Individual board members that network with key individuals in the community and monitors charter school legislation.
- A practice of evaluating your board annually.



What can a Board do to better their school?

- A standard board calendar with items that are addressed on a regular basis.
- Be Efficient, focused, purposeful, and productive in meetings.
- A practice of using Roberts Rules of Order to conduct meetings.
- Financial checks and balances that provide for good oversight of public funds.
- Individual board members always learning about charter school and other education issues.

Take three minutes to think about...

- Are you fulfilling all of these practices with your board?
- Are there ways to improve the way the board operates?
- Are there policies that you want to adopt that might include some of these practices?



Something to think about as a board...

Academic Performance

- Overall proficiency
- Student growth
- Subgroup data/gaps
- Student Attendance

Governance and Finance

Effectiveness of Leadership

Student Attrition Rate/Wait list

Compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of the charter

Board Performance-financial, sustainability, governance, goals, and teacher retention

The Charter School Board is Expected to...

- Ensure that students are learning and meeting the academic performance criteria set by your charter, and the school is adhering to its State Board Approved Educational Plan.



The Charter School Board is Expected to...

- Ensure the school is abiding by the North Carolina state law for Charter Schools (GS115C-238.29)
- The law includes **specific requirements** for: Teacher Licensure, Student admissions, Charter renewal, Background checks for all employees, Criminal History checks through the SBI for all personnel & board members responsible for fiscal management.
- The law includes many other requirements, pertinent to the day to day operations of every charter school. Board members should have copies of and be familiar with the law.

The Charter School Board is Expected to...

- Formally **approve** the hiring or dismissal of any **teacher or staff member** who were recommended by the lead administrator or hiring committee.
- Board minutes should reflect these approvals with **teacher names specified**.
- Hire, supervise, and evaluate the charter school lead administrator
- Remember: The lead administrator is the only staff member supervised and evaluated by the board. Staff and parent concerns should be redirected to school administration or to the school's formal grievance procedure.



Who is responsible?



Policies	Time and Attention	
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission • Strategy • Survival • Leadership 	Board's Decisions	
Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorizations • Finance policies • Enrollment • Employment Terms 	Shared Decisions: Board and Administrator	
Operational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Program • Systems 	Board's Advice	Administrator Decisions



Role with Administrator

- Should be one that has a shared vision, mission, and partnership with trust through a communication plan.
- A defined role for everyone that outlines the responsibilities and goals for each member of the board and outlines the expectations for administrators.
- Not to micromanage but evaluates administrator's performance.



Responsibilities of the board...

- Follow Open Meetings Law, Charter School Law, Policies, approved Amendments, Public School Law, School's approved Bylaws, and Charter Agreement.
- Design a non-profit strategic plan, fiscal plan, management plan along with who is responsible for what.
- Follow Parliamentary Procedures
- Analyze and Evaluate reports
- Media relations



Why Does It Matter How the Board Conducts Its Meetings?

- The Charter School Board of Directors has the public trust to govern and appropriately expend the *public funds* allotted to the *public charter school*.
- The business of the school *must be discussed* and decided on *openly* in board meetings.
- Properly conducted board meetings are fundamental to effective school leadership.
- *Minutes of meetings* become the legal documentation of the non-profit corporation's decisions.

Promote Effective Board Meetings by...recommending a set agenda

(Disseminated a week in advance)

- Start on Time

- Set Agenda

Call to order

Minutes

Officer Reports

Special Committee Reports

Special Order

Unfinished Business

Public concerns

New Business

Announcements

Adjournment

Adjournment time

- End on Time

Effective Board Meetings

Stay on task through Parliamentary Procedures

Present motions  Second motions  Debate/Discuss 

Vote on Motions  Record vote results

- **Remember, Board chair must restate the motion so all members of board and audience can hear the motion and all voting according to Open Meeting Laws must be completed in open session**

Open Meetings Law



- Meetings must be open to the public and provide notice in advance of the meeting date, time, and location:
 - Regular Meetings: Seven Days and Posted (web site, and any other media approved by board)
 - Special Meeting: 48 hours - Including Subcommittee Meetings
 - Emergency Meeting: Immediately after notice is given to ALL board members
- Minutes approved monthly and kept in a location available to public (Possible areas: Administration office or website)

Open Meetings Law

- Electronic “discussions” of school business involving several board members could be construed as a meeting and be in violation of the open meetings law
- Board members may communicate with other members by email...but avoid discussions and **“REPLY TO ALL”**



Closed (Executive) Session

- Must state one or more purposes of going into closed session:

One or more of the nine legal purposes must be stated verbally.

(Note purpose in the meeting minutes)

- Closed session discussion **MUST** be kept confidential
- Minutes are minimal and recorded



What are the 9 reasons for Closed Session?

1. Privileged Information – General Statute 132 (Personnel, Student, Closed Session)
2. Discuss Award or Scholarship
3. Consult with attorney (not about general policy)
4. Expansion: (Real estate/business negotiation)
5. Negotiations: (terms of employment contracts)
6. Personnel matters
7. Investigate concerns of criminal matters
8. Form emergency plans for response to School violence
9. Briefings from law and safety (public safety issues or response to terrorism)

What do we do with the closed session minutes?

- Closed Session Minutes must be kept (Minimal notes – not for the purpose of general public viewing)
- Board should designate the PLACE closed session minutes are kept. (separate from open meeting notes and approved by your board).
- Come out of Closed Session to vote (Motion must be restated so public understands what the vote is for)
- Must come out of Closed Session to Adjourn Meeting

What do amendments have to do with our Board?

Requires SBE Approval

- Enrollment growth >20%
- Grade expansion
- LEA Relocation
- Transferring non-profit
- Altering mission or targeted student population
- Employing or terminating a management company
- Changing the application respecting the National School Lunch program or student transportation.

Requires OCS Approval

- Bylaws
- The name of the charter school
- The Articles of Incorporation
- Class sizes as stated in the application
- Length of school day and/or academic year
- Curriculum changes.

What do amendments have to do with our Board?

- Charter School Board minutes must reflect approved motion regarding ALL amendments. Then those amendment must go through a process starting with contacting OCS.

Remember

- There are many things that the board must do, but you don't have to do it alone.
- Continue to think of ways to improve the board by doing a self reflection/evaluation from time to time.
- Set the board up for a successful meeting by using an set agenda that incorporates a routine expectation for board meetings.
- Know your role and how you can contribute to the board and when in doubt ask questions to the right people inside and outside of your organization.

Important to Remember

A board of directors speaks with “one voice, or not at all.” In other words, no single board member has the authority to speak for - or make decisions for - the full board.



Thank you for listening!

- Questions?



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